Nation

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# Respect is a two-way street

*by Steve Bonspiel*

The fight between the Grand Council and the Municipalité de la Baie James has heated up recently as Cree policing, the Red Chute project and the proposed Cox Cree Lodging Camp have hit snags in some form or another from jealous or ignorant non-Natives.

Being a Cree in what can be a very racist and judgmental non-Native population in the north is not easy and there is one important bit of moral conduct notably missing: it's called respect.

Category 3 lands are increasingly seen as a free-for-all zone for non-Native municipalities, with cockamamie schemes such as the SNC-Lavalin firing range and pig farm projects in Chapais, not to mention the Red Chute project on the Waswanipi River, which the Crees still have not been consulted on three years after the fact.

The list is extensive. Did you know that if you cross over onto a federated skidoo trail on your own trapline with the day's catch, without the proper permit, that you could be fined?

One of the scariest examples of the blatant disrespect for Cree people is the dump located on Chisasibi's Cox family trapline. Within the dump, used principally by Hydro Quebec, are a number of recycled materials, thick electrical cables, industrial equipment including stoves and the most shocking thing, caribou carcasses that have been killed and pillaged by poachers.

The carcasses are almost intact, with their bellies ripped open and gutted. Their limbs, heads and fur are all visible. They have been dumped in with the rest of the everyday trash from nearby LG-2.

These caribou are part of the Cree cycle of life. Is this any way to thank the Cree for letting these dams be built on their land? What about the caribou? Do these people have a conscience or any respect at all?

Does the Paix des Braves' "New Relationship Agreement" mean anything if it is not enforced? Where are the game wardens? What is the MBJ doing about it?

Respect is, however, a two way street. One of the complaints from many people of mixed blood in the communities concerns the racism they experience at the hands of their Cree brothers and sisters for being "white."

Racism on either side is what it is – ugly, divisive and cruel. It especially has no place in Cree society, a society that thrives on respect and patience and above all, understanding of others.

Through ignorance, a man like former Radisson Town Council Member Gilbert Hamel used to dislike the Crees. He admits it. But he also said that once he met a few Crees and learned about their way of life he changed as a person.

Now he is trying to help Josie Cox get his camp started, which has won him only hate from his former neighbors in Radisson.

Racist views of non-Natives by Crees could be explained by bitter feelings brought on by the rapid encroachment onto Cree lands and a shabby treatment at the hands of non-Native business people who routinely refuse to rent rooms to Cree clients. That way of thinking should be a thing of the past. If you are discriminated against, report it to police, the GCC or your band council. That is a start.

If that does not work, call us here at *the Nation*.

There are good and bad people in every society, but blaming non-Natives for everything and hating them because of the colour of their skin makes Crees look exactly like the people they detest. Is that something we want to teach the future generations?

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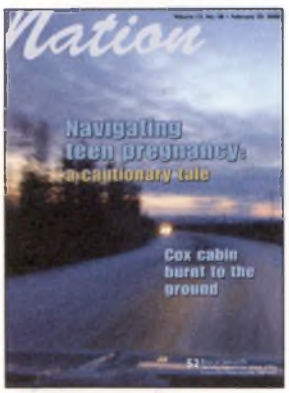


photo:
**Jessica Landry**

by Sonny Orr

# Flu management

I looked at the poor, suffering people, sitting patiently waiting for the nurse to come out and call their names. I heard a person's name called out and was shocked to see someone else get up, but then I realized that they used maiden names here, so I settled back in my waiting chair with a groan. No need to correct the nurse, go ahead, heal someone. The coughing and sniffling got louder and a baby's crying was starting to make everyone wish that they were safely in a infirmary somewhere else, when I heard my own name called at last.

Wiping my dripping nose, I got up and shuffled over to the examination room, careful not to trip on any children. I sat down on the cold chair. Everywhere around me, the propaganda of the medical trade beckoned me to cut back on sugar, to wear a condom, not to smoke, watch my fat intake and to exercise more often. I looked around some more, looking to see if there was any advice on how to avoid catching the cold or flu. A disheartening notice told me that there was no cure for the cold and that if untreated, the flu could go pandemic.

The nurse, smiling and attentive, asked my about my problem. I pointed to my nose, aching ear and head. She was quick with her prognosis, and determined that I was a victim of nasty sinus congestion worthy of antibiotics, muscle relaxants and some decongestant that oddly was cut in half. A note was given to me, allocating some time off to recover. I was also given some reassurance, that I was number 300 to come in with similar symptoms.

Later, after lolling around in a sweaty fever, trying not to concentrate on my aches and pains, I thought of times when, way back, getting a cold was a lot more deadly, and the cure was often a lot less tasty than Buckley's Mixture.

One year, when I was quite young, a real epidemic swept through our community. My mother, being a registered nurse, employed me to tow around a small sled laden with vaccines. We went house to house, deploying the valuable cure to everyone who was ill. To this day, some people recall that time and told me that I was a little saviour. Even though I barely remember, I do recall that some people could not get out of bed to do any chores, some places needed a little wood to be chopped, and that was done for a few stricken with this ailment.

Going back several decades earlier, one sickness was so deadly people were quarantined to the outlying Loon Islands, where many perished. We camped there many times when we were young, on one of the few sandy parts of the rocky island.

We talked about that time when Scarlet Fever struck our community of Fort George pretty hard. We thought about where the ones who died were buried on Loon Island and an eerie thought came to us: what if we were camped right on top of those graves? Shuddering, we tried to get those thoughts out of our young minds and settled down to a fitful sleep. The next morning, we moved our tent to the pebbled beach area and continued our expedition to kill whatever came into our sights.

Today, many get sick quicker and easier, with global travel making it easy to spread any deadly bug to any populated area quicker than you can say SARS. A words of advice: try not to shake hands and keep the kissing and cheek pecking to a minimum and make sure your medical card is up to date. Signing off with a fever and a rabid temperature, I remain still sick (sniffle, cough, hack…).

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Canada

# Chapais mayor tries green spin on hog factory

*By Steve Bonspiel*

Chapais Mayor Jacques Bérubé is not letting go of his dream to create a massive, 100,000-strong pig farm outside his northern community despite Cree and environmental opposition.

As recently reported in *the Nation*, Bérubé is now seeking financial aid from a Polish firm to help give life to his stalled hog project. He followed that up recently by sending a four-page letter to Waswanipi Chief John Kitchen begging him to reconsider his opposition towards the project.

> "To me this project doesn't really exist. It's not working down south and I don't see it working up north."

The letter read, in part:

*Not only is Chapais's project not dead but it is definitely stronger than ever. It is even getting more and more support from the population in general, politicians, various government and regional authorities, and potential investors. It is getting that support because it has changed a great deal since 2005.*

"He said the project has changed, but it hasn't been changed," Kitchen told *the Nation*. "I verified that with the environment people. I never saw any changes. It's still the same old project."

The "environment people" Kitchen was referring to is the joint Cree-Quebec board called COMEX that is set up to review the environmental impact of proposed projects as well as to determine if it makes economic sense. They also take into consideration the impact of each project on the tallymen and their traplines.

A call to Brian Craik, one of the two Cree representatives on the board, revealed that, to his knowledge, the project had not changed and that the questions COMEX posed to the mayor in 2005 to clarify details of the project are still unanswered.

Kitchen said he is looking out for people like the late Lawrence Dixon and his family. Before he died, Dixon was vehemently opposed to the project for fear of the impact hog waste and other associated elements would have on the land and the water.

"To me this project doesn't really exist," said Kitchen. "It's not working down south and I don't see it working up north."

The letter went on to further explain the need for such a project and in it, Bérubé claimed to be "shocked" by Waswanipi's opposition.

*We are amazed by your attitude toward this mission and especially by your propensity to associate this initiative with a lack of respect for the Crees. The town of Chapais quite simply carried out one of its most important duties—especially in the current context—which is to work towards stabilizing and diversifying the economy of our community and of the region.*

Kitchen said Waswanipi felt slighted by Bérubé's approach. "I think he did his homework backwards. Instead of taking the project and doing it, he should have met with the tallymen and with the Cree Nation. He didn't do that."

The letter also said: *"Chapais's project to produce and process natural pork is going to redefine Québec's pork industry, mainly because it is green and quasi-organic, and due to its biosafety and profitability."*

Bérubé is "just making things up now," Kitchen said, concerning the new environmental spin.

Kitchen added that he is always willing to speak to Chapais town council to explain why Waswanipi is against this project.

"No matter what I would not accept it," said Kitchen. "I do have people I have to protect who are trappers and tallymen like the Dixons. If they don't want this kind of project, I'll stand and support them. I remember Mr. Lawrence Dixon's words and I'll stand behind them."

> I have people to protect who are trappers and tallymen like the Dixons. If they don't want this kind of project, I'll stand and support them.

Kitchen said a couple of proposals contained in the letter to meet with a facilitator as well as an invite to a hog farm in Europe were a "waste of time and money."

Bérubé's letter concluded by saying: *However, these are also Category III lands, which are clearly defined in the James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement. As we understand it, it is your land, our land and Québec's land.*

"It's still Aboriginal land," Kitchen concluded. "As long as we still practice our traditional lifestyle on that land, we do have a say on it."

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# Cox family under siege – again

## Poachers and vandals add to danger

*By Steve Bonspiel*

The Cox family is under attack once again as a cabin situated on their trapline was burnt to the ground January 18. Firefighters responded to the scene, but according to eyewitnesses, no evidence was taken to verify if the fire was in fact arson.

Josie Cox, who is a Cree Culture Teacher at the James Bay Eeyou School in Chisasibi, is sick and tired of everything he has had to put up with since launching a Cree Traditional Lodging Camp to attract tourists to the area and teach them Cree ways many years ago.

"I wasn't there when it happened," said Cox. "I got a bit upset because the people staying there were good friends of mine."

Cox says he has a general idea who set the cabin on fire, but he would not identify the individuals. "There were a lot of skidoos going around at that time the night before and shots were fired. There is a lot of poaching that goes on around there."

The incident is not an isolated one as the Cox trapline has taken numerous hits since LG-2 was completed in the 1980s.

Some of the things that hinder Cox's ability to hunt and trap on his trapline include:

- An airport, which sits a few kilometres from his main cabin.
- A dump, filled with Caribou carcasses and material that should be recycled as well as plenty of other types of waste, rests upon a hill nearby. When a strong wind picks up, debris flies all over the place, making a huge mess. People have also burnt garbage there, which sometimes includes propane tanks and other dangerous materials.
- A federated skidoo trail runs right though his driveway and if he drives his snowmobile on the trail without a proper pass, he will be fined.
- The old Camping des Pins, owned by the MBJ and leased through the Ministry of Natural Resources, is mere metres from his cabin. Although the MBJ told *the Nation* they would let the permit on the defunct campground expire a few years ago, it has since been renewed.
- Within his trapline lies a "lottery zone" where hunters apply to hunt two caribou each during hunting season. They are then eligible to catch another two caribou with an outfitter. Cox's brother Sam runs a Cree Outfitting Camp and he cannot hunt in these areas, which constitute a very large part of the family trapline, because he is not allowed to as an outfitter under MBJ rules.

Two years ago, MBJ officials painted a red X on one of his Cree lodges to halt construction because it did not conform to its building code.

Cox was not pleased. "Apparently there is a building code for Cree lodging," he said. "Not in my book."

He is also looking to build a Cree Learning and Information Centre on the old Camping des Pins site, but the Ministry of Natural Resources said they need more information on the proposed activities of both components before they give the project a green light.

When Cox started negotiations to buy the buildings he currently owns from Hydro back in the mid-1990s, the slow pace of the talks enabled some unknown vandals to tear the place apart. Provincial firefighters from La Société de protection des forêts contre le feu (SOPFEU) were living there at the time.

*The Nation* visited the dump and the cabins formerly owned by Hydro.

> We want to find solutions to what's going on and for non-Natives to have more respect for the land

Garbage bags full of Caribou carcasses

Josie Cox

continued on page 31

# YOUTH AND ELDERS GATHERING

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## Cree youth walk for suicide awareness

The Cree Nation Youth Council has organized walks for suicide awareness in four communities in Eeyou Istchee. The daytime walks will be followed by a healing circle in the evenings where all are encouraged to share their experiences dealing with suicide. The "Journey Through the Heart of Eeyou Istchee 2008 - Journey of Hope, Embracing Life" touches down in the following communities:

**Waswanipi:** Tuesday, February 19

**Ouje-Bougoumou:** Saturday, February 23 - Monday, February 25 - 87 km

**Mistissini:** Saturday, March 1 - Monday, March 3 - 126 km

**Nemaska:** Thursday, March 20 - 224 km - FINISH

For more information or if you are interested in joining the journey, contact your local Youth Council or Youth Department for more information or contact the Cree Nation Youth Council at (819) 673-2600.

## Eastmain crooner to sing NHL anthems

Jonathan Cheechoo won't be the only Cree from Moose Factory at the March 3 Canadiens game in San Jose. Eastmain's Marilyn McLeod will be singing the national anthem in Cree, English and French at the game.

"Singing the national anthem at a hockey game has been a dream of mine for a long time," McLeod told *the Nation*.

Although McLeod has been singing since she was four years old and often sings at weddings or community events, it is only recently that she is considering pursuing a career as a singer.

McLeod currently resides in Moose Factory, where she works as a family service worker for the MoCreebec Nation.

## Entrepreneurs compete for cash

The 10th Annual Quebec Entrepreneurship Contest has announced that the First Nations Prize will total $10,000 this year. The contest is organized by the First Nations of Quebec and Labrador Economic Development Commission and funded by the Secrétariat aux Affaires Autochtones and the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada.

The award will likely be split into two categories: $5,000 for entrepreneurs living within their community and $5,000 for those living outside of their communities.

Candidates must submit their business plans by March 17, 2008.

For further information, visit the website of the Quebec Entrepreneurship Contest at:
www.concours-entrepreneur.org.

## *Moose TV* wins best comedy series.

Rezolution Picture's *Moose TV* took home the best comedy Indie Award at the inaugural Canadian Film and Television Awards ceremony, held in Ottawa February 20. The Showcase series won out over tough competitors *Corner Gas* and *Little Mosque on the Prairie*.

Producer Ernest Webb dedicated the award to his father during his acceptance speech.

"My biggest thanks are for my father. This one is for him," said Chisasibi's Webb.

Other big winners at the ceremony included Sarah Polley for her feature film *Away From Her*, which is also up for an Oscar.

## Homeless radio

CKUT, McGill University's campus radio station, held its sixth annual Homelessness Marathon outside the Native Friendship Centre of Montreal February 20 to dramatize the plight of people with nowhere to go in the cold.

Designed as a consciousness-raising event, the marathon began at sundown and ended at 7 am. It provided an opportunity for homeless people and their advocates to discuss homelessness issues and possible solutions. Over 40 campus and community radio stations across Canada broadcast the marathon, which was also broadcast online.

As the marathon was not intended as a means of fund-raising, solicitations were not taken over the air.

feature

# Pregnant teens

## it's hard but with hard work you can make a life

By Amy German

*For as much as the schools, the health board, the media and parents can stress the importance of safe and healthy sexual practices and delaying sexual activity until such time that an individual is mature enough to make decisions, teens will be teens. In trying to get an understanding for what the experience of being a teenage parent is like,* the Nation *sought out those who were willing to share their stories.*

### *Vera Pien*

Today Vera Pien is a happy 23-year-old mother to a seven-year-old boy. She is educated, works at the Val D'Or Friendship Centre and occasionally goes out on dates. But things were not always so bright and merry for Pien as a teenaged mother.

Hailing from the tiny Winneway reserve near Ville-Marie, Pien discovered she was pregnant when she was only 15.

"I was raised by my mom; she was a single mother and I have two sisters but my dad wasn't really around so I was wandering around, looking for that love," said Pien. She did find love, but in all the wrong places.

Prior to getting pregnant, Pien was anxiously looking forward to finishing high school like any other girl her age. But then, "I met my boyfriend and from that time on I guess you could say I was rebellious as a teenager. My mother, you know, she told me about sex and all of that but I was the type of girl who thought, 'Oh, that is just not going to happen to me, I am smarter than that,'" she said.

Terrified, confused and not looking to be the subject of gossip for her little reserve of 300 people, Pien effectively concealed her pregnancy until the day of her son's birth. "At eight months pregnant I only weighed 150 pounds. I was really watching what I was eating and I used to walk around a lot, I was confused but at the same time I got pregnant when I was 15 and gave birth when I was 16," she said.

Of course the entire community eventually found out. "It was the biggest shock in my reserve at the time. They said, 'Where did you hide your baby? You did not look pregnant,'" she said with a giggle.

Though she can look back at that aspect of the experience and be amused by it, being a pregnant teen was not her only problem as she was also a pregnant teenager in an abusive relationship.

When Pien informed her boyfriend that she was pregnant, "He was really shocked but at the same time he was happy to be a father back then. Later on when it came to facing the realities and the responsibilities, he still wanted to be a little boy, drinking and all of that. He was not ready for

what he thought he was ready for. He was 16 at the time, one year older than I am," she explained.

"He has now not seen my son since he was two so it has been four or five years. I was in an abusive relationship with the father of my son for two years. I realized that I couldn't take it anymore because the only reason I stuck around with him at the time was because I did not want my son to grow up like me, without a father around. But, now I understand why some women leave, it's the black eyes and the bruises and I just couldn't take it anymore. I just had to really step out."

Pien was fortunate to have a very supportive family who would baby-sit for her when she felt like socializing like a normal teenager and they allowed the child's father to live with the family.

Despite the support, being a teenager caring for an infant was still difficult. "I was really, really glad that I had a baby. But later on it started to get tough with the night feedings and going to school and homework," she said.

Amazingly, Pien did graduate high school the following year and then left her community and headed to North Bay, Ontario, to pursue studies in office administration.

Though being a single mother in a new town while going to college was difficult, Pien persevered. "The only time where I could do my homework was when he was sleeping and then I would study and study and study. But I did all of this because of my friends back then. They were always drinking and I saw social workers taking their kids away and I just didn't want to go through that. I wanted to go out there and do something else with my life, to be somebody to my child. It was important for me to be a role model to him," she said.

I WANTED TO GO OUT THERE AND DO SOMETHING ELSE WITH MY LIFE, TO BE SOMEBODY TO MY CHILD. **IT WAS IMPORTANT FOR ME TO BE A ROLE MODEL TO HIM.**

Still, for Pien having a child as an unprepared teenager with an abusive partner has not left her free of emotional scars. "I guess you could say that I still carry that past relationship that I had. It's still hard for me to cope with it. So, you could say that I am not fully healed yet. I go on dates and stuff but I am not really ready," said Pien.

With her career and her priorities in place, Vera Pien was happy to have the opportunity to share her story with the readers of *the Nation*.

"People would look at me while I was pregnant and say, 'Oh, there is another girl who got pregnant too young who is going nowhere.' I just wanted to prove them wrong. I am very happy that I have made it this far," said Pien.

## *Mary's Story:*

While many teenaged girls who get pregnant have the option of staying with their families during such a life changing experience, "Mary" from a Northern Native community did not have such a luxury when she suddenly found herself pregnant at 15.

Mary describes the experience of being a teenaged mother as, "really bad, I wouldn't recommend it to anyone, no, not at all." At the same time, when asked what her life was like prior to getting pregnant, her response was similar, "Oh, it was really bad too. I had a bad youth I guess where there was lots of abuse and stuff like that. I changed [foster] families a lot too. I had nobody to hold on to."

As a product of the foster care system from a tender age, Mary didn't care what her parents or any of her family thought when she got pregnant, as it simply wasn't relevant to her. "I got a lot of judgments for being pregnant at 16 because I was too young but it did not really bother me," she said.

Mary might not have struggled as much with the stigma of being a pregnant teenager, and she actually enjoyed the physical experience of being pregnant despite her age, reality set in once her son was born.

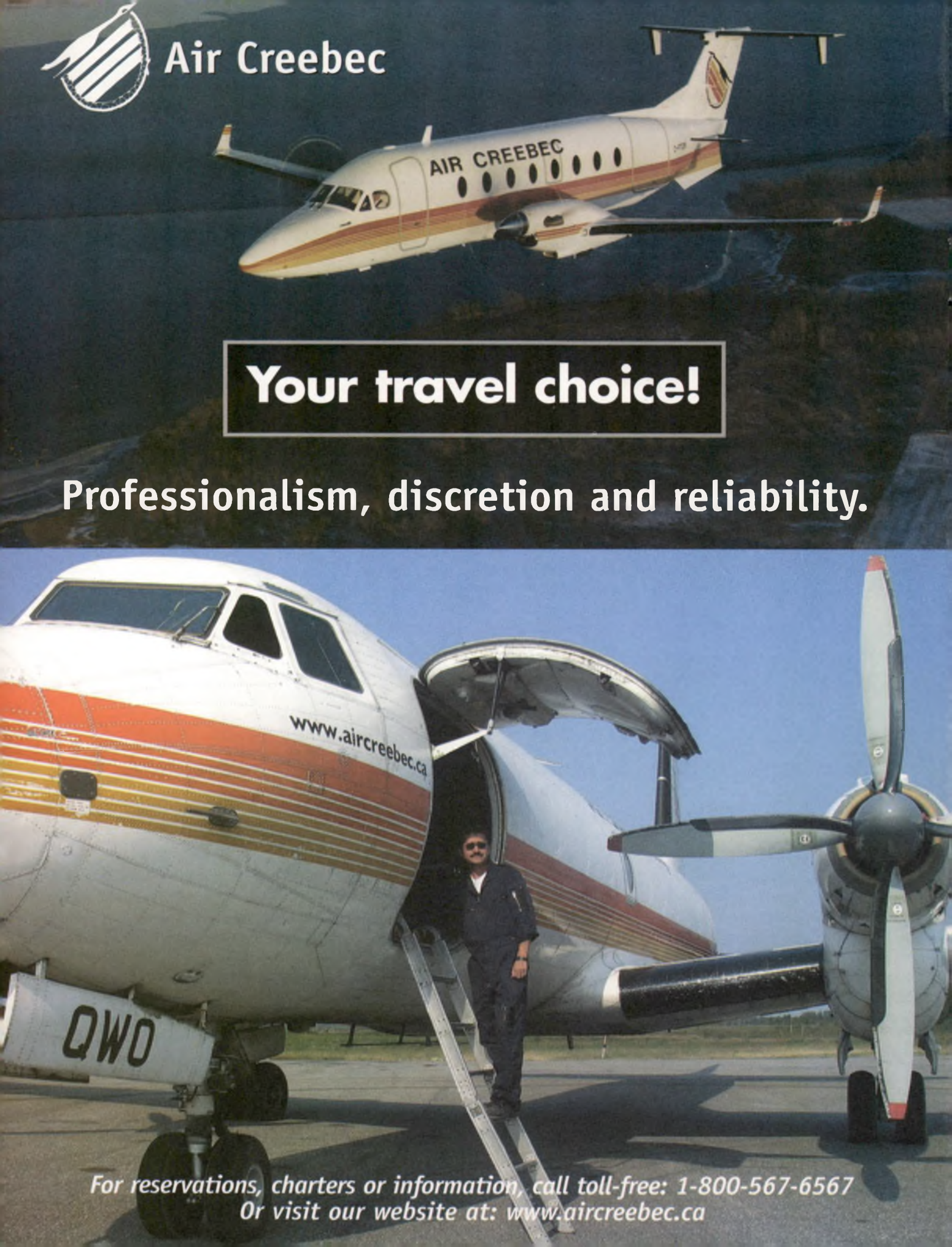
Though she was living in foster care when she discovered she was pregnant, Tina felt the need to leave her temporary nest to create her own. Her child's father was in the picture for a while but she eventually chose to leave him due to his abusive nature. "It was better for me to be alone because my baby's father was a woman abuser."

As a single, 16-year-old mother caring for an infant without any support from her family, Mary had to drop out of high school to care for her baby and descended into a deep depression. "I went through a few depressions and then went to a treatment centre and tried to go back to school but I had to quit because my son was always sick and stuff like that. I would not recommend this because it really was hard," said Mary.

At the same time, having her baby might have been what kept Mary from going down a far worse path. " I guess if I had not been pregnant at the time I would have been an alcoholic today. This made me take a different road in life because I was starting to have dependencies on drugs and alcohol. But when I got pregnant I stopped everything," she said.

Today Mary is 23 years old. She finally returned to school full time when she was 19, graduated and chose pursue her studies at the Cégep de l'Abitibi-Témiscamingue in Val D'Or. She says that she really loves the program she has chosen in school. "My life is really, really good! It's a lot better than it was. I support myself; I now also have a daughter and a boyfriend," she said.

When asked what kind of advice she would like to pass on to other teens Mary said, "I would tell those girls to be careful and to really think things through. I decided to keep the kid because I wanted to prove to everybody else that I was responsible enough to take care of myself and that I would not need paid families from social services anymore. But, it was the wrong decision I guess because I went through a lot of shit. I don't regret it, but I wouldn't recommend it."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# Quebec drops the ball on sex ed
# Crees develop own curriculum

*By Amy German*

When it comes to dispensing information on sexuality and sexual health to the youth of the Cree Nation, much like the rest of the province, there have been some major issues in regards to sex education within the school systems.

Previously sex education was taught as a part of moral and religious instruction within high schools, but since those programs were eliminated as part of education reform a few years ago, it has not been mandatory for schools to offer the instruction. Teachers who felt comfortable enough with the subject matter and wished to teach it did, those who did not didn't and there has been no formal curriculum for the program in some time. What the government is presently proposing is to include sex education as part of either a new "ethics" course that is slated to replace Moral and Religious Education. It was also proposed as part of a health program in high schools that fits in with physical education.

> ***We have got very concrete research in place that talks about how comprehensive sex education does reduce the likelihood of teen pregnancy and STIs and HIV.***

Stephanie Mitelman is a sexuality educator and a Canadian certified family educator who has done consultation work for the Cree School Board and the Ministry of Education with regards to sex education.

"There is a reform in place for Quebec and it that says that sex should be taught from a number of different perspectives," said Mitelman. "The concept of it is quite nice and quite utopic but the delivery of it and the access to resources, materials and training that the government has put in has really set everyone up to fail. They have not trained anyone properly, they haven't given any money to resources, none of that. We had a system before where some people were semi-trained to do this and they were doing it and now we have a system where there is no understanding as to who is supposed to do the sex education, how and when."

According to Mitelman, it is the principal's responsibility to delegate who is going to teach what and to whom, but most principals are not even aware that it is their responsibility to delegate.

When sex education does not happen amongst youth or when youth are presented with information that could be deemed as incomplete because the instructor was not comfortable with the subject matter or it went against their personal beliefs, the youth lose out.

In the United States the "abstinence until marriage," sexual education program has been favoured over a more global approach as a result of federal government funding initiatives. The program excludes all other types of sexual and reproductive health education, particularly regarding birth control and safer sex. Though the debate has raged as to whether the abstinence programs are a contributing factor, the birth rate rose by 3 per cent between 2005 and 2006 among 15-to-19-year-olds, after plummeting 34 per cent between 1991 and 2005, according to the National Centre for Health Statistics.

This was the first time that the U.S. teen pregnancy rate had risen in 15 years. Previously the public health program to combat teen pregnancy had been considered a success story. Though there is no concrete evidence as to whether the American abstinence programs have directly contributed to the rise in the teen pregnancies, as of 2008, 16 states in the US have rejected the congressional funding for abstinence only education. The US spends $176 million annually funding abstinence education but states that accept the funds are in turn prohibited from teaching any other form of contraception within the schools.

"We have got very concrete research in place that talks about how comprehensive sex education does reduce the likelihood of teen pregnancy and STIs and HIV," said Mitelman. "We know that but the question becomes how do we deliver comprehensive sex education when you live within a community or society that does not. If we should have sex education, well, then we need to pool money into it, we need to train people properly and we need to give teachers the tools and the materials that they need to deliver this."

For more information on the sex education programs that Stephanie Mitelman has developed for schools, teachers, nurses and specifically for First Nation communities, go to http://sexpressions.ca

There is good news for both the Cree communities and the rest of the province's school-aged youth as a new pilot project that is undergoing trials in high schools in Waswanipi and Waskaganish could change the face of sex education in Quebec.

The Chî kayeh Program was co-authored by the Cree Health Board's own Marlene Beaulieu, who is in charge for communications for the Cree Board of Health and is their School Health Program Officer along with Françoise Caron, a sexologist. The program consists of a one-year, two-credit course. In the pilot project it has been taught by trained secondary three and four homeroom teachers.

The program consists of a teacher's guide that includes lesson plans, power-point presentations, overheads and various other teaching materials along with a colour textbook. The textbook itself is a first in the province. According to Beaulieu, so far the program has had an overwhelmingly positive response from the teachers, students and parents in the communities and the program could be implemented in all of the communities as early as fall 2008 for those schools that want it.

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# the BIRDS and BEES of BIRTH CONTROL

## Cree teens have a high rate of pregnancy – but not for lack of options

*By Amy German*

*As of 2005, almost one of every five babies in the Cree communities was born to teenage mothers aged 15 to 19. The numbers speak volumes about the lack of birth control being used in the communities despite its widespread availability.*

*According to Martine Drolet, RN and Program Officer for Sexual and Mental Health in the Public Health Department of the James Bay Cree Territory, when it comes to birth control, "Most Crees don't take anything, they just 'pull out.' People think that when you pull out you won't ejaculate inside. But, they forget that there is also pre-ejaculatory fluid that is full of spermatozoid so with this contact you can get pregnant."*

*For as much as contraception is available through the North's clinics, the system under which it is distributed is dramatically different from the rest of the province where anyone can go to the doctor or pharmacy of their choice to obtain whatever they want anonymously. The selection of contraceptives, products and medical services is limited in the North. The following is an overview of what kinds of birth control are available in the communities, what is not and who should use what according to their needs.*

### Condoms

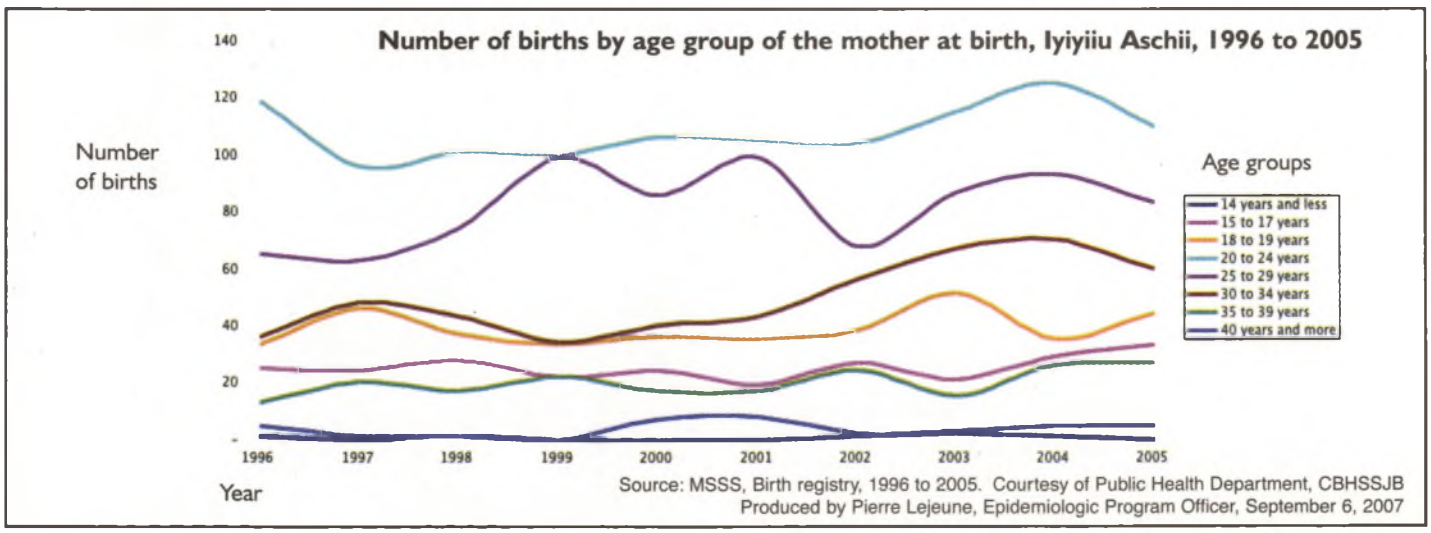
According to Drolet, condoms are widely available at community clinics, wellness centres, some band offices, through school nurses and through community health representatives.

"Condoms are a good method if you use them correctly," she said. "We are not sure if everyone is using them correctly or at the right moment." Drolet emphasized the necessity of avoiding any penetration before putting a condom on.

Though their accessibility might be advantageous, on the down side some do find that condoms can interfere with their sexual experience. As well, the co-operation of the male partner is needed and then there are those who are allergic to latex.

As the condoms that are distributed within the Cree communities do not come in large packages where instructions and diagrams are provided, Drolet says that the Cree Health Board has instead installed pictograms where condoms are distributed to explain their use. "Also when the 15-year-olds come in for their booster shots we take this time to teach the teenagers how to use a condom. We talk about sexuality and protection," said Drolet.

Female condoms are available in most pharmacies throughout Quebec but they are not available in the Cree communities. The female condom is a polyurethane pouch with rings at both ends that prevent the sperm from being deposited in the vagina. It is advantageous in the sense that it provides slightly more coverage of the vulva, thus adding extra protection against disease transmission but they are not as widely used as the male version. Should there be interest in this particular product, the CHB could make it more available within the communities.



## *In Memoriam*
## *Mr. Pierre Laberge*

*James Bay Cree Communications Society is saddened by the sudden and unexpected death of their colleague and dear friend Mr. Pierre Laberge. Pierre worked with JBCCS over the past few years, training local radio station staff in Jonquiere a couple of years ago in newer technologies involving radio programming. More recently, Pierre was training the staff at JBCCS. Mr. Laberge enjoyed his visits here in the north and genuinely did all he could to assist us at delivering quality programming to the people here in Eeyou Istchee. Pierre Laberge will be sadly missed by all who knew him.*

# Pssst...

Have any information you'd like to share with *the Nation*? Feel like there's something the rest of the Cree Nation should know?

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## Oral contraceptives

Birth control pills are synthetic compounds that mimic the effects of female hormones estrogen and/or progesterone, preventing the release of an egg from the ovaries. As some women experienced difficulty taking the original forms of the pill, which contained both hormones, there are now prescriptions available on the market that contain only one of the hormones.

The pill is ideal for most women as it is easy to use, does not interfere with sexual activity and can have added health benefits (it reduces the risk of endometrial and ovarian cancers, decreases menstrual flow and even reduces acne). The down side of the pill is that it needs to be taken every day without fail and it increases the risk for blood clots, heart attacks and strokes, particularly in women who smoke and are over the age of 35.

## Depo Provera Injections

Depo Provera is another form of hormonal therapy that prevents pregnancy. It is a synthetic progestin serum that is injected into the muscular region of the arm every three months.

Drolet said the injections are a common alternative to contraceptive pills in the Cree communities. A team from the CHB comes four times a year to the clinic to dispense it. Patients may even receive reminder calls. "We can make a check list and call them in advance to make sure that they don't forget, especially for the youth," said Drolet. "So, it's a good contraception that has been used for 35 years." One possible side effect is slight weight gain.

Depo Provera is ideal for those who do not want to have to worry about taking the pill daily and it's a great alternative for those who are intolerant to estrogen.

Depo Provera can be disadvantageous in the sense that it may take up to 18 months to be able to conceive a pregnancy after the method has been stopped and it can cause irregular bleeding. Women who have experienced unexplained vaginal bleeding, liver disease, heart attacks, strokes, breast cancer or blood clots should not take this medication.

## The Contraceptive Patch or Evra

Evra is a transdermal patch or sticker that can be applied to various different parts of the body and it delivers a steady dose of progestin and estrogen through the skin. The patch needs to be replaced once a week for three weeks out of the month but is not needed during the week that a woman menstruates.

It's not recommended for women who weigh more than 98 kilograms because it can increase the risk of a blood clot in the brain. "It is not, however, very effective with the youth because they tend to forget it," said Drolet.

What is ideal about the patch is that it is easy to use and it also does not interrupt sexual activity. The patch functions similarly to oral contraceptives and it has similar benefits though it can fall off though it is designed to be durable and last through things like bathing and heavy activity. It can also cause breast tenderness and local skin reactions. The contraindications for this drug are similar to oral contraceptives.

## IUDs or Intrauterine Devices

An IUD is a small, T-shaped, wire device that contains copper wire. The device kills sperm and it changes the environment in the uterus, creating difficulty for a fertilized egg to implant. Levonorgestrel-releasing IUDs release a synthetic hormone to thicken the cervical mucus and thins out the uterine lining. Women who are deemed good candidates by their physicians can have this device implanted by their doctors.

IUDs are ideal for women who want a long-term but reversible form of birth control as it can last from five to eight years and its effects stop immediately after a doctor removes it. They are not, however, recommended for women who have STIs, who have multiple partners or who have metal allergies. Some maintenance is required with this form of birth control, as patients need to check if the device is still in place after each menstrual cycle. IUDs can also randomly fall out.

## The Morning After Pill/ Ovral/ Plan B

The "morning after pill" is a combination of high-dose female hormones – estrogen and progestin – and it is generally used as an emergency back-up plan for a woman who has had unprotected intercourse or who was using a contraceptive method that failed. It must be administered within 72 hours of having unprotected intercourse and is most effective within the first 12-24 hours. Neither form of the medication is an abortive method but they are instead believed to prevent a pregnancy by slowing down the rate at which the egg travels through the fallopian tube and altering the uterine lining so that the egg, if fertilized, cannot implant and begin to develop.

There are two forms of this medication available in Quebec: Ovral and Plan B. Ovral contains both of the hormones and can cause nausea, but Plan B, a much newer drug, does not have as intense side effects. "It is available at the clinics and the hospital and we have the Ovral type most of the time," said Drolet, though the CHB is looking to switch to Plan B soon. Unlike the rest of the province where the drug is available over the counter at any pharmacy, both forms of this medication are dispensed in the clinics within the Cree communities.

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***What is not available within the Cree communities but can be obtained in other regions of the province:***

### Diaphragms

The diaphragm is a flat ring covered by a latex dome that is inserted prior to intercourse to cover the cervix, thus preventing sperm from making contact with the egg. It is used in conjunction with spermacide to not only lubricate the device but to keep it from moving. The diaphragm needs to stay in for a minimum of eight hours after sexual activity but can not stay in longer than 24 hours.

The diaphragm needs to be inserted before sex so it won't interrupt sexual activity but it does require planning and users of this form of birth control need to carry them around and have spermacidal gel or cream on hand. Women also need to be fitted for this product by their physicians.

### Cervical Caps

Cervical caps are smaller latex caps that also cover the cervix and prevent sperm from fertilizing eggs. It is extremely similar to the diaphragm, but this device can be left in for up to 48 hours.

### Spermicide

Much like insecticide, spermicide is a chemical compound that kills sperm. It comes in the form of a gel, cream, foam, film or suppository. Generally it is used in conjunction with another form of birth control as it is not as effective on its own. Spermicide needs to be inserted into the vagina prior to intercourse.

### Contraceptive Sponges

The sponge is a round, single use, polyurethane foam barrier that contains spermacide and is placed deep in the vagina to absorb sperm, trapping and destroying them to prevent conception. The indications for this product are also quite similar to both the cervical cap and the diaphragm only the sponge needs to stay in for six hours after intercourse but no longer than 24 hours.

As to why these products are not available in the communities, Drolet said they are too archaic. "They are old fashioned. It's old contraception, and they're not that popular," said Drolet.

### Surgical Procedures

The following three procedures are available to Crees, free of charge, as they are to all Quebec residents. However, they are not available in the communities like many other medical procedures and would require an individual to leave to seek out the services where they are available.

### Female Tubal Ligation

Also known as "getting your tubes tied," a tubal ligation can be performed by a doctor. The procedure involves disconnecting the two fallopian tubes that transport the egg to the uterus. Though the procedure is not entirely irreversible, the reversals do not have a high success rate. This procedure is not as ideal for those who are younger and may desire children later on.

### Male Vasectomy

A vasectomy is a surgical procedure in which the vasa deferentia are cut for the purpose of blocking the sperm from entering the ejaculatory fluid. Without sperm conception can not take place. It is a simple procedure that is not easily reversible. This is another procedure that is not generally recommended to younger men who may want children later on in life.

### Abortion

Abortion is the surgical termination of a pregnancy by the removal or expulsion of an embryo from the uterus. In Canada, access to abortion services is guaranteed by the Canada Health Act and is a safe, legal procedure that is covered under Medicare. As of January 2008, due to a class-action lawsuit headed up by abortion pioneer Henry Morgentaler, all abortions in Quebec are now covered. This means that the charges previously incurred from private clinic abortions are not only covered but also those who had the procedure in a private clinic between 1999 and early 2006 can now be reimbursed for the procedure.

Any female who wishes to obtain an abortion does not need parental consent nor consent from a partner.

Abortions are available in many CLSCs, hospitals and private clinics. Almost all regions have to be represented meaning that women shouldn't have to go very far to obtain the service.

In that the CHB was not forthcoming about the abortion services for the Cree communities, it can only be assumed that abortions are treated the same way any other surgical procedure would be since that is the law in Canada and there is a guarantee of service in place. Like any other medical procedure, a patient can inquire about obtaining the procedure through her doctor.

For those who wish to bypass the regular medical channels, the procedure is offered at over 35 different medical centres across the province and the closest to the communities are located in Val D'Or, Rouyn Noranda and Chibougamau.

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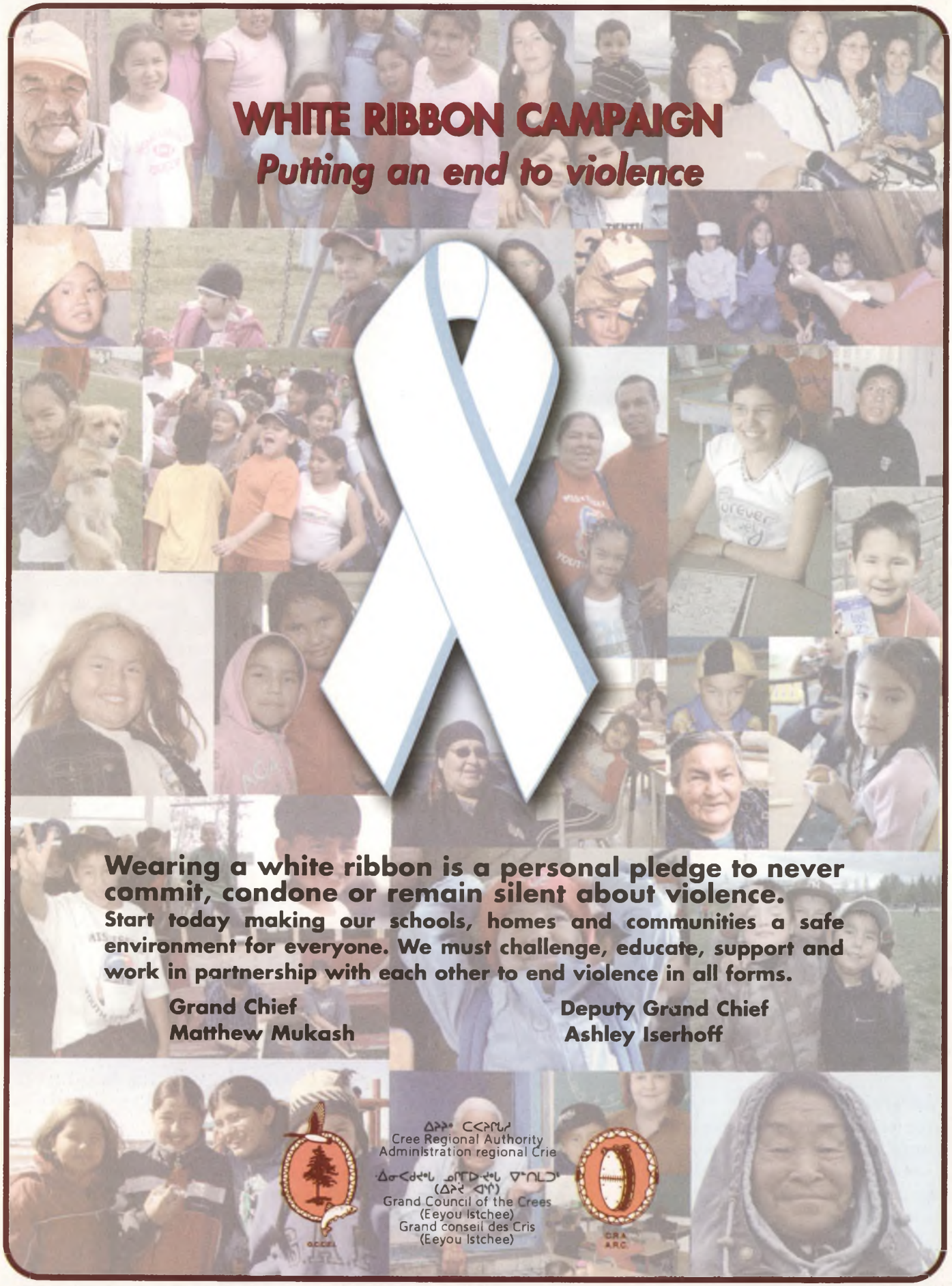
*The family planning clinic in Rouyn Noranda can be reached at 819-762-5599 ext. 45073*
*The Centre de santé de Chibougamau also has a family planning clinic that can be reached at 418-748-7658 ext. 4214*
*The Morgentaler Clinic in Montreal can also be reached at 514-844-4844*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# The White Ribbon Campaign

*By Will Nicholls*

The Cree campaign to end violence against women may have been conceived as a two-week effort last fall, but many Cree men are saying it should last 12 months of the year.

It all started when Deputy Grand Chief Ashley Iserhoff met with the Cree Women of Eeyou Istchee, who challenged him to take on the task of some problems they saw involving women and children. As a result Iserhoff brought a motion to a Grand Council / Cree Regional Authority Special General Assembly on Health and Social Issues in November on the White Ribbon Campaign. The resolution noted that the world campaign to end violence against women and children officially runs November 26 until December 10, 2007, and those wearing the white ribbons make a personal pledge to never commit, condone or remain silent about violence against women.

"We took it a little further than just women because of what we are experiencing in all our communities," Iserhoff said. "There are violent acts and we want all violence to stop."

The White Ribbon Campaign is the largest effort in the world of men working to end violence against women. The WRC is a homegrown campaign started by Canadian men in 1991. Over 100,000 men responded in an initial campaign that lasted six weeks.

Wearing a white ribbon is a personal pledge to never commit, condone or remain silent about violence against women and girls. Wearing a white ribbon is a way of saying, "Our future has no violence against women."

Iserhoff's resolution was passed and directed the Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee) / Cree Regional Authority, Cree communities and organizations to promote this campaign throughout the Cree Nation. It goes further than the White Ribbon Campaign in saying "the Cree political, educational, health, social and economic leadership encourage participation in the campaign to end all forms of violence in both work and social environments throughout the Cree Nation."

The campaign is a continuing one for the Crees, and many Cree men have taken this to heart. Apparently in Whapmagoustui men are still wearing their white ribbons and refusing to give them up. Even at a local band meeting in Mistissini January 23, people were still handing out information and white ribbons to band members at the meeting.

This year, the White Ribbon Campaign challenges you to do something, anything, to help realize a future that has no violence against women. You can start by wearing a White Ribbon and making the pledge to never commit, condone, or remain silent about violence against women. Explore your own attitude, behaviours and beliefs about gender-based violence. Make a change that starts within.

"Change is not going to come from the leadership, change is not going to come from heads of organizations, change has to come from individuals and from the home," said Iserhoff.

The White Ribbon Campaign is a daunting task for many but as more join in many hands will lessen the workload.

Violence against women includes physical and sexual assault, sexual harassment, and emotional abuse. Not all violence leaves visible scars. Emotional violence includes regular subjection to demeaning jokes, domineering forms of behaviour, and sexual harassment.

Some forms of violence have a greater physical or emotional impact than others. But all forms of violence contribute to the very real fear and suffering that women in our society endure. The basic rights that most men enjoy – safety in their homes, ability to go out at night, a job free of harassment – are much harder to guarantee for women in much of the world.

Sometimes the fear is greatest in women's own homes. A common myth is that most violence is committed by strangers. The fact is, when a woman faces violence it is usually by a man she knows – her husband, boyfriend, father, or employer.

WE NEED TO BE ACTIVE PARTICIPANTS IN PREVENTING ACTS OF VIOLENCE FROM HAPPENING IN OUR COMMUNITIES.

Deputy Grand Chief Ashley Iserhoff

Most individual acts of men's violence are an attempt to assert control over others. Paradoxically, most violent acts by men are a sign of weakness, insecurity, and lack of self-esteem combined with a capacity for physical or verbal domination and feeling that they should be superior and in control.

Some violent incidents by men can be linked to substance abuse. Using alcohol or drugs may unleash feelings, fears, rage, and insecurities that some men cannot handle.

But drugs or alcohol don't cause violence. Genes don't cause violence. Ultimately, it is the attempt by some men to dominate women, or adults' attempts to dominate children, or some men's attempts to dominate other men or groups of men. Violence is a way of asserting power, privilege, and control. Violence is a way for compensating for feelings that you're not a "real man."

"Parents need to teach their children that violence is something that you never do. It's not normal and we shouldn't accept that type of behavior in our communities. We need to be active participants in preventing acts of violence from happening in our communities."

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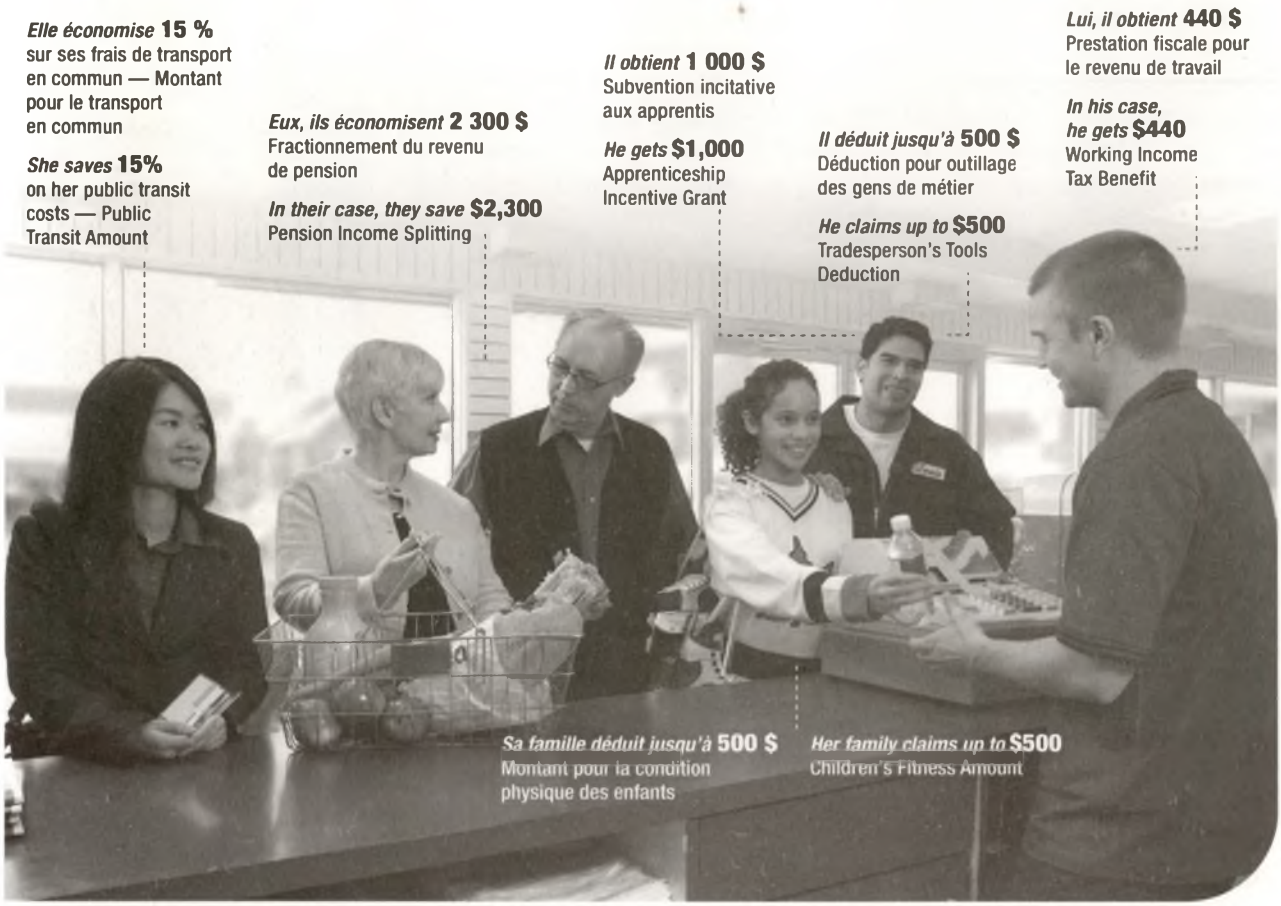
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Les Canadiens peuvent aussi bénéficier d'une réduction du taux d'imposition du revenu des particuliers le moins élevé, qui est passé de 15,5 % à 15 %, ainsi que d'une augmentation du montant personnel de base, qui a été porté à 9 600 $.

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Canada

# A practical dictionary for everyday Cree

*By Steve Bonspiel*

Learning a language gets harder as people age, but Kevin Brousseau is hoping that his method, in the form of researching and writing a 5,000-word dictionary, will make the Cree language more accessible and easy to learn for Iynu and non-Iynu of all ages.

Brousseau laments the fact that he never learned his language as a youngster and saw this project as a way to learn Cree. He learned how to read and write syllabics and speak "rough" Cree during the three years it took him to produce the book.

"This is the first of its kind where a Native person took the initiative to do it by himself with no financial support," said Brousseau. "Usually outside linguists are hired to do this."

He is very proud of that fact, but he is not bitter about it. Instead he sees it as his way of contributing to Cree society.

"We have to be responsible for the preservation and promotion of our language," he said. "When we always hire out, we're not showing that interest. If the certain entities are not really pushing for funding of new works or providing translation of literature and writing in the language, it's up to us as Iynu people to take up the slack and start producing these things. The idea is to create our own literature."

*The Practical Iynu Dictionary* sells for $30. It has an easy-to-use style that aids people who want to use everyday phrases and words, but don't have a strong enough background in the language.

The other Cree dictionary that people currently use is much larger in size and covers many more specific, detailed words. However, it uses a Cree-to-English index only, whereas *The Practical Iynu Dictionary* also uses the English-to-Cree index for more flexibility.

"You won't learn about specific terms in hunting, but you'll learn words that will help you every day," said Brousseau, who is currently doing his masters in linguistics at the Université de Quebec à Montreal.

Brousseau released the dictionary through his company, Nikan Publishing. After an initial printing run of 60 copies sold out quickly, he is waiting for more to come in.

"I really didn't think they would move so fast. The reaction I got was amazing," he said.

His mom and grandmother helped out with many of the words, as both are fluent speakers.

Athough he reconstructed a couple of dictionaries from the 1700s and 1800s and searched for old words to study the origin and come up with a clearer understanding of the word, Brousseau said that his dictionary is a contemporary one that drew its strength from Iynu speakers. He also researched early Jesuit relations with Eenouch to get further definitions of words.

*The Practical Iynu Dictionary* focuses on the southern inland dialect, but Brousseau said that his dream is to work on all Iynu dialects, including the dialects of the Attikamek and Innu.

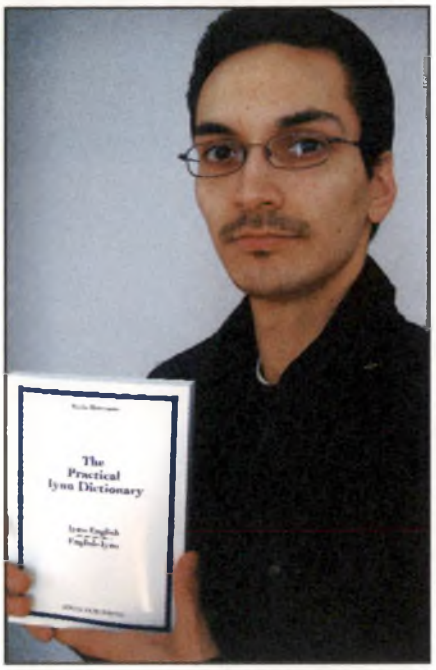


photo by Brian Brousseau

Kevin Brousseau with the Practical Iynu Dictionary

"The idea was to create language learning tools. This was the first in a line of hopefully many tools and future editions," said Brousseau, 27, who has been independently studying Iynu dialects since he was 18.

The amount of work that went into creating the dictionary took a toll on Brousseau and now that he is done he feels like a weight has been lifted off of his shoulders.

"It was tough sometimes, going over the dictionary over and over and staying up till 2 am just to make sure I had correct forms or trying to understand a specific form that was obscure. But it was worth it for sure!"

Although Cree is strong right now, all that could change in the coming years, especially if non-natives continue to expand up north and more and more Crees move out of the communities. With *The Practical Iynu Dictionary*, Crees can stay in touch with their language no matter where they go.

"We're lucky that people speak the language within the community," he said. "The idea is to take it to the next level and make people conscious about the fact that we can use our language in a modern-day world. We can have literature in our language and translate scientific and medical terms into our language. We can do everything in our language, that's our goal."

For more information on how to obtain a copy of *The Practical Iynu Dictionary*, send an email to info@nikanpublishing.com or call Kevin Brousseau at 514-633-6439.

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# Cirque du Soleil and me

By Steve Bonspiel

It was an anniversary of sorts. Cirque de Soleil's Saltimbanco was making a triumphant return after a 15-year absence from Montreal, and I was attending my 10th performance of the world famous troupe. Oh and I was also a small part of the show, but we'll get to that later.

The Cirque performers never cease to amaze me. Their body-bending, death-defying tactics are always fun to watch. I kept thinking to myself, do these guys ever get hurt? Do they ever miss a beat? Or fall?

Sadly, the day after I attended the show, an acrobat fell on another and broke his leg. My question had been answered.

The first thing I noticed (and it wasn't hard thanks to my great seat) was the colour. Vibrant, beautiful and bold, Saltimbanco left nothing on the easel. If the performers just stood around and chatted, the colours alone would almost be worth the price of admission.

The costumes were, as per usual, awesome in a Dr. Seuss kind of way. You really have to see a show like this to fully appreciate the amount of life a flashy, taut get-up does for the orbs.

Since this is one of the older Cirque shows, it has a few elements that keep it close to its circus roots. The guy on a bicycle made Lance Armstrong look like a little boy on a tricycle with his dazzling array of tricks and his superb control of his ride.

The male and female percussionist duo was neat. Banging on a drum that hard really is an art.

There were the usual visually pleasing aerial stunts that saw performers fall safely onto large mattresses. It seemed a little too safe to me. I wanted to see more blatant disregard for human life and safety.

Now to my debut: a spotlight flashed on me and I was like a deer in the headlights. I stood up and pretended to fall down as a clown whipped a fake ball at me. It was funny but hardly anyone wanted me to take such pride in my one minute of fame so I got up and ripped it right back to him. And then it was over. Pity.

Saltimbanco was easily one of the Cirque's best shows. I figured since it was in an arena as large as the Bell Centre that it would take away from the show's ambience. It did not.

The main thing I learned during the show is the tremendous bang for your buck Cirque de Soleil doles out every time. For more information on Saltimbanco or to plan a trip to see one of their resident shows, visit www.cirquedusoleil.com.

# James Bay Cree Telephone Book 2008

## Meegwetch!

**We here at Beesum Communications would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who generously contributed to updating the new Cree phone book. We could not have done it without you!**

**Special thanks go out to the Band Council representatives who graciously compiled and updated community telephone listings. Your dedication and hard work is greatly appreciated.**

**The 2008 Phone Books are in! Please pick up your copy at your community band office.**

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**The legend of Wachiyeh**

Dear Nation:

I want to share with you the origins of *wachiyeh* and how it came about. I want to do this so that the next time you use *wachiyeh* it has relevance and a deep significance.

Long ago, two young men returned to their village at Na-meh-go-sibi (roughly meaning "land of the trout" or "trout waters") and reported that they had discovered different markings of how the trees were cut along the coast of their homeland, Winnipeg ("Murky Waters"), now known as Hudson Bay in Northern Ontario. They shared with the families that the chips they found on the ground had been cut by someone who was different from them and the tool was certainly different from the way the people cut their trees.

Upon hearing this Na-May-Bin, a wise and special man (a name meaning "White Sucker" after the fish) told the young men to go back and to bring a chip back to him for his examination. The site of the chips was somewhere over 40 miles away from their camp. So the young men set forth and brought a chip to Na-May-Bin. Upon receiving the chip Na-may-bin instructed everyone to go inside their lodges and to stay put. No-one was to go out of their lodges during his examination. Na-May-Bin proceeded by setting up a Ko-sa-ba-chi-cun (Forecasting Lodge) a fair distance from the other dwellings and slightly away from the people. Ko-sa-ba-chi-cun today is bastardized as "Shaking Tent" by literature. Na-may-bin set forth to examine by forecasting for the meaning and revelations the chip may give him.

Once he was in his lodge one of the elderly women crept out of her lodge. Na-may-bin knew and immediately shouted, "I said everyone must stay in their lodges." He knew what was going on. After the camp settled Na-may-bin proceeded with his forecasting.

When he came out from his forecasting lodge, this is what he sang to the people.

*"Wachiyeh wachiyeh to all of the numbers of people in this planet."*
*"Wachiyeh wachiyeh to all of the numbers of people in this planet."*
*"Wachiyeh wachiyeh to all of the books and manuscripts that exist in the planet."*
*"Wachiyeh wachiyeh to all of the books and manuscripts that exist in the planet."*
*"Wachiyeh wachiyeh to the talking cloths that fly high in the sky."*
*"Wachiyeh wachiyeh to the talking cloths that fly high in the sky."*
*"Wachiyeh wachiyeh to all of the things that talk."*
*"Wachiyeh wachiyeh to all of the things that talk."*

After he sang his song, the people laughed at the word "Wachiyeh." This was the first time the word Wachiyeh was heard and spoken. *Wachiyeh* means to shake hands with someone. It is a universal greeting. You can use it as a greeting or a farewell.

For the longest time the people sang this song and did not know the relevance of it. Today we know there are countless number of nationalities of people across the planet. There are libraries, bookstores, magazines and the "Bible" that have come into our lives. As Native people we even publish our own newspapers.

The talking cloths are flags which are hung every day and they fly high in the sky. Flags speak to us by telling us what nationality the flag may belong to. Even hockey organizations and their banners tell us something. Community logos are a big one.

The people did not understand what "to all of the things that talk" meant. When the first fuel steel drums starting popping in the summer heat at the start of the century the folks wondered if that was what Na-May-Bin meant. I believe Na-May-Bin predicted the Morse code, telephone, radio, TV, fax machines, computers, the Internet and the hand-held gadgets of today. There is video conferencing. If you look around us we know the sound of a plane when we hear one even when we don't have to see it. The sound of cars, horns... and all of those things speak to us. Even signal lights speak to us. We know what they are for, because they speak to us. They tell us something. Some people have even heard the bomb speak. In some parts of the world it continues to speak.

I was born and raised at this place where Na-may-bin performed his forecasting, which is called "Ma-ta-peh-ti-now." It means "a hill that lies towards the river." It is a special place for me.

When I think about Na-may-bin I am amazed at the new gadgets that come forth each year. Some of them literally talk, especially in the communication sector. As long as I live I will look forward as Na-May-Bin's forecast continues to unfold.

Several years ago I was developing a language program with a nun who I invited for the school of the community. The nun was First Nations. As part of her work she dedicated her life to Native-language instruction and for the future preservation of the language. As part of our work we shared so much of our history and the stories of our ancestors and the people of the past generally. I recited this forecasting about *wachiyeh* with her and I said, "Why are we not including the history of forecasting of the ancestors to the students of today?"

She was agitated. She said, "Forecasting is a thing of the past" I said when our people practiced and used forecasting the Nation was healthier. I told her in my mind forecasting was the accurate way of touching the cornerstones to preliminary planning and to knowing the obstacles and the benefits ahead of time. Forecasting allowed us to avoid negative decisions that could prove to be detrimental to the living environment.

I believe we should hold no fear to the ability of forecasting today. It is a practice that should come back into our lives. As Native people we are always playing "secondary role functions" to all major decisions that affect our lives.

I want to honour the way Na-May-Bin foretold of the future. It is very accurate. So until next time, I extend a sincere "Wachiyeh" to all.

George Hunter
Peawanuck, Ontario

NEW DAY IN IIYIYIU ASCHII- KITTY WAKES UP...
BEEP! BEEP!
7:20
BIG DAY TODAY... BROOMBALL TRYOUTS AFTER SCHOOL!!
DAD, CAN I HAVE MONEY FOR LUNCH?
NO- KITTY, WALK HOME FROM SCHOOL - WE'RE GOING TO HAVE MOOSE TOGETHER AS A FAMILY!
EKUTEH!
LUNCHTIME...
KITTY, HOW WAS SCHOOL THIS MORNING?
GREAT! PASSED MY MATH TEST NO PROBLEM.
TAAPWE CHIKASCHIHUN!
GOOD JOB, SIS!
SHE GETS ALL THE ATTENTION!
Building a healthier, stronger Cree nation.
Conseil Cri de la santé et des services sociaux de la Baie James
Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay
illustration: Teddy J. Otter
TO BE CONTINUED...

## Remembering Clarke Jonathon Small

We, the family of our beloved Clarke Jonathon Small would like to express our heartfelt gratitude for the tremendous support that was shown during the loss of our son, brother, uncle, nephew, and grandson Clarke.

Words can never express enough our deep appreciation to all the people and organizations in Moose Factory, Moosonee, Waskaganish and Communities along the James Bay Coast during the Search and Recovery operations.

We will always remember the many hugs, handshakes, cooked meals, food, and words of comfort that were shown during this time.

Special thanks to Moosonee Transportation Ltd, Rhae Cool, Cree Aski Services Ltd, Waskaganish First Nation for their financial contribution for charters, to all the people and organizations who donated financially to the search and recovery operations and to the community of Waskaganish for their hospitality and support.

### *Who is ....*

*Who is a person who spends endless hours in helping without pay,*
*Who is a person where a cry for help brings a split-second hand,*
*Who is a person who is devastated when lives are lost or maimed,*
*Who is a person who graciously welcomes others and helps them in any way.*
*Who is a person who sacrifices home life and tender moments*
*Who is a person who may be asked to give more than just dedication,*
*Who is a person that is not asked but gives more... and more... and more,*
*That person is a volunteer...*

We are ever so grateful for all the volunteers involved in the search and recovery operations.

To all the volunteers of the ccommand post, MF S and R, search and recovery volunteers, Thank you from the bottom of our hearts. As years go by we will look back and kindly remember you. Our family will be forever grateful for the support shown during this very difficult time. God bless you all and may you be richly blessed in your own way.

**Jimmy and Judy Small and family (MF)**
**Oliver Small and family (MF)**
**George and Jane Shecapio and family (MF/Wask)**

## Rosalyn Lloy

*1965-2008*

Roz passed away on February 17, 2008 after a lengthy courageous battle with ovarian cancer at the age of forty-three. Her strength and determination was admired by many.

Roz worked as production coordinator for *the Nation* at Beesum Communications for one year, replacing a co-worker on maternity leave. She was a no-nonsense type of person and went the extra mile to get things done. She will be sadly missed by all of her co-workers.

Roz was a versatile musician having played trumpet in the military. She played guitar with a soulful passion and was a great jammer. She owned and ran a bar in Montreal with her partner Dominique. Later, her love of the North lead her to work as a cook at the hotel in Kuujuuak for 3 years. A year before returning to Montreal she lived in the middle of the woods in remote Newburne, Nova Scotia.

She loved riding her 1100cc motorcycle and was extremely fit while training to embark upon a military career. She wanted to be an operator on a submarine.

She will be lovingly missed by her partner Dominique Durand and sister Susan Lloy. She will be remembered as an open-hearted and generous friend.

*There's no use in weeping,*
*Though we are condemned to part:*
*There's such a thing as keeping*
*A remembrance in one's heart.*

*Parting* by
Charlotte Brontë

LES GRANDS PRIX DU TOURISME QUÉBÉCOIS 2008

# Grands PRIX du Tourisme Québécois

## Desjardins 2008

## De nature et de culture...

Pour la première fois cette année, Tourisme Baie-James s'associe avec la nouvelle association touristique régionale crie, Tourisme Eeyou Istchee, pour présenter le gala régional qui se tiendra le 3 avril prochain à Mistissini. Cette collaboration représente un défi à relever pour les deux associations et permettra de créer des rapprochements entre les deux communautés et l'industrie touristique.

Le gala régional des Grand Prix du tourisme québécois Desjardins vise à reconnaître les entreprises qui se démarquent par leur excellence et leurs efforts en tourisme.

Nous invitons tous les représentants de l'industrie touristique à se joindre à nous pour cet événement. Pour ce faire, veuillez communiquer avec nous au 1-888-748-8140.

## Of nature and culture...

For the first time this year, James Bay Tourism is partnering with the new regional Cree tourism association, Eeyou Istchee Tourism, for the presentation of the regional gala that will be held April 3rd, 2008 in Mistissini. The collaboration between both associations in rising to meet this challenge can only strengthen and increase the relationship between the two communities and the tourism industry.

The regional gala of the Desjardins Quebec Tourism Awards recognizes businesses that have distinguished themselves by their excellence and efforts in the tourism industry.

We would like to invite all representatives from the Tourism industry to join us for this event. In order to do so, simply get in touch with us at 1-888-748-8140.

tourisme Baie-James

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the Nation

Le Jamésien

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Telebec

continued from page 7

The cabins have clearly been destroyed to stop Cox from opening a business there.

Pieces of a large industrial stove have been ripped off, the burners missing and the dials gone. The fluorescent lighting on the ceiling is gone, windows are broken and .22 calibre bullet holes have penetrated the window and found a resting place around head level in some of the walls.

All this, coupled with an intimidating visit by a dangerously low-flying helicopter a couple of years ago that ripped the electrical housing off the side of one of the cabins and a burn mark the size of a desk in the middle of one of the cabin floor, has Cox and his two business partners fearing for their lives.

A Caribou carcass left behind by poachers

Josie Cox's main camp

Garbage strewn about on the Cox trapline

---

"It's all the misinformation by Radisson and others that keep people ignorant about the Crees. Once people get to know them and how much they are always willing to help out, they respect the Crees much more."

---

Because of numerous attempts by vandals to break into each cabin, guard dogs are now left to watch over them.

Business partner Sylvain Paquin and consultant Gilbert Hamel stay at the camp, located near kilometre 581, to document some of these incidents and to discourage vandals from further damaging Cox's place.

They allege that their dogs have been poisoned and that soon after *the Nation* ran an article about Cox's troubles on his trapline, Hydro came in to rip out the electrical access for the camp, making it much more difficult and costly to start it up later on. According to Hamel, the guy from Hydro who gave the orders, which they have on tape, was forced into early retirement after it was brought to his superiors.

Hamel, who used to sit on Radisson's town council, admitted he once thought the creation and future success of the town of 300 was a good thing.

"I wanted it to succeed," said Hamel. "I fought for Radisson's rights to be recognized as a town, but I knew little about Crees back then."

Hamel said many people in Radisson discouraged him from hanging out and making friends with Crees. Once he did start to talk to the Crees, however, he soon fell in love with their lifestyle, teachings and most importantly, their way of life that was not being protected enough.

"It's all the misinformation by Radisson and others that keep people ignorant about the Crees," Hamel said. "Once people get to know them and how much they are always willing to help out, they respect the Crees much more."

Hamel claims that the MBJ has passed resolutions to accommodate their own needs. One example, according to Hamel, is the size of illegal cabins. It used to be that 14' X 16' was the legal maximum size of a cabin. New MBJ bylaws authorize much bigger projects, a few of which are two stories high, house a large number of hunters and have a much larger impact on the Cox trapline.

"Radisson was only supposed to be a camp for Hydro, but now it has expanded into an illegal locality," said Cox, who is working with lawyers to put together a package that will shed more light on his current dilemma and help to document his plight.

"We want to find solutions to what's going on and for non-Natives to have more respect for the land," he said.

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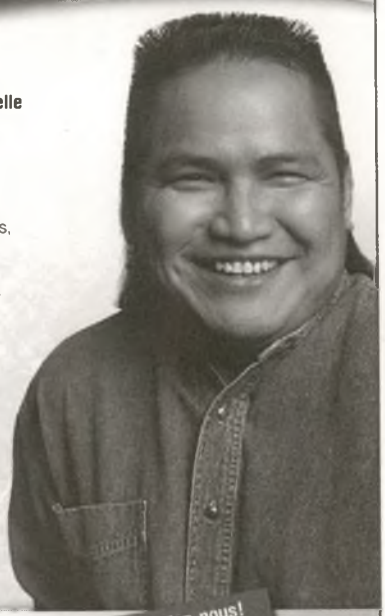

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- La formation professionnelle
- Les opportunités d'emploi
- Les conditions de travail sur un chantier de construction
- Et plus ....

| | |
|---|---|
| Waskaganish | 3 mars |
| Nemaska | 4 mars |
| Eastmain | 5 mars |
| Wemindji | 7 mars |
| Chisasibi | 8, 9 mars |
| Mistissini | 11 mars |
| Oujé-Bougoumou | 12 mars |
| Waswanipi | 13 mars |

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## Information session for Construction workers

**Subjects:**

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- Vocational training
- Employment opportunities
- Working conditions
- And more!

| | |
|---|---|
| Waskaganish | March 3 |
| Nemaska | March 4 |
| Eastmain | March 5 |
| Wemindji | March 7 |
| Chisasibi | March 8, 9 |
| Mistissini | March 11 |
| Oujé-Bougoumou | March 12 |
| Waswanipi | March 13 |

**Check for local time and place with Alain Tremblay, fieldworker for the Crees, call 819 354-5412**

Commission de la construction du Québec

# UNDER THE NORTHERN SKY

## The oasis at the hockey rink

by Xavier Kataquapit

It is another cold winter evening in Attawapiskat and my friends and I are gathered outside passing the time. I am 10 years old and my buddies and I are considering our options on another quiet, unexciting evening in our community. Actually, there really is only one choice and that's the open-air hockey rink behind the elementary school in the centre of town.

The glow of the high-powered flood lights from the rink light up the night. You can see the shimmering light illuminating the frosty air from just about any point in town. Everyone waits for the lights to come on after dark. The power is controlled by two or three individuals from the town's maintenance department. Some nights they are forgetful or preoccupied and the town buzzes with questions about their punctuality. People go searching for them and the lights ultimately are turned on. Fortunately, on most nights the light guys are mindful of their responsibilities to the community's only night time meeting place. Once the lights are on many in the community hit the streets and head for the rink.

Once or twice a week, the adults take over the rink for their regular games of organized hockey, but, for the rest of the time, the evenings are free to anyone. During these free nights, the ice rink is a meeting point for everyone in town. People of all ages arrive at the rink with skates and a hockey stick to practice in evening temperatures that dip to minus 30 and 40. We brave the temperatures for as long as we can. We have brought our winter boots and as soon as the chill begins to freeze through our layers of socks and leather skates, we change to warmer footwear and continue playing.

Youngsters from nearby homes run around on the 10-foot-high snow banks that surround the rink. The steep banks of white snow are held back by four-foot plywood walls and a four-foot high chain link fence that sits on top of the boards. The white paint on the boards is marked and dented with the pounding of hundreds of black rubber pucks. The chain-link fence has openings for the two opposing teams and access to two penalty box areas.

The visitors to this evening scene are a mix of people from the community. Young boys like myself stick close to friends and we try to protect our own little corner of the rink. We are leery of losing our puck to older teenagers that can skate from one end of the ice to another in a flash and dance circles around us. These teenagers play quick one-on-ones with their friends and they dart in and out of the sidelines in search of a loose puck.

Some players who are not the strongest or fastest instead develop quick hands and stick handling skills that provide more of a show for the rest of us. There are also players that have fashioned strange looking, customized sticks that have been melted over a fire to provide outrageous curves that send pucks flying high in the air. Older teenagers and young men swoosh through the crowds and occupy centre ice as they pound the walls with heavy slap shots, wrist shots and back hands. They compete amongst each other for the title of hardest shot, the most accurate or the highest flying puck. It is like a circus ring full of dazzling acts, little clowns, freaks and strong men.

All these characters dance around in a chaotic frenzy of skating players, flying pucks and boys running around in heavy boots. Once in a while everything stops as a flying puck hits a player or there is an accidental collision of skaters. No matter what happens the flow on the ice does not stop for long. The activity here is continuous and we all lose ourselves inside the confines of the boards under the glow of bright white flood lights that are suspended on poles high above the rink. We are multiplied in shadows that follow us on the hard white surface.

The chain link fence is lined with onlookers bundled in parkas and heavy boots. They are mindful of the flying pucks that regularly launch past the eight-foot height of the fence and boards. The onlookers keep track of these loose missiles and they help in locating the wayward pucks in the deep snow. Snowmobiles regularly pull up on the high snow banks and their riders take a moment to overlook the scene and then continue their journey through the community.

At one point in the evening, I stop playing and climb over the boards to walk up one of the high banks. I savour the moment and hover over the scene. I feel a sense of excitement at the spectacle below me. I am exhausted from hours of skating, running and stick handling. The night ends here for me as I sit trying to capture the moment, the characters and the feeling while frost pumps out of my lungs. On my walk home I feel as though I have put in a good night. At the front door of my house I turn to hear the final sounds from the rink. The laughter, hoots and chatter are punctuated by the sharp crack and thud of pucks bouncing off the boards. In a sea of uncertainty and chaos I am thankful for the oasis at the hockey rink.

# CLASSIFIEDS

## BIRTHS

I want to congratulate my daughter Lisa and husband Richard on the safe arrival of their daughter Chelsea Carrie Mary Meyobinokow. She was born on Feb 1, 2008 at 9:56 a.m. in Val-d'Or, Qc and weighted 6lbs, 15 ounces. Everyone in our family was waiting and hoping that it was a girl and we got our wish!!! A little sister for Toby and JJ. Take care of her and cherish her, she is one beautiful girl with her jet black hair. Finally got your own isdance, eh Lisa and Richard? Someone to walk down the aisle.

## BIRTHDAYS

Happy 3? Birthday to Leslie "Bigfoot" Mianscum on March 26th! He is still a handsome hunk of a-bushman and we lubb you ever much! Thanks for always looking out for us. Love your younger sisters...Robin & Charlene...

Happy Birthday to Keenan Nakogee!! Teach me how to play Xbox 360 so I can whup your momma's butt k? I love you so much and have a wonderful day! Love Auntie Robin.

Happy 6th Birthday to my handsome son Ryan Campbell! He is turning six years old on March 28th! Eat lots of cake, ice cream and chips cuz you ain't allowed to have any more until next year!! (ha ha just "kiddlin"). Mama lubbs you very much my honeybunny!

Happy Birthday to Christopher Atsynia on February 14th. Wishing you all the best and many b-days to come. No partying cause you partied a lot while you were in vd. Haha...Just joking. With love from 62 Beaver Road and 8 Willow Crescent in Wemindji.

We would like to wish a Happy Birthday to Gabriella on February 13th. Wishing you all the best. We love you so much. Many more b-days to come. Stay in school. With love from Mom, Dad, Malcolm & Jacqueline, your brothers, Albert & Davey and your sister, Rose-Marie. Xoxoxo From Wemindji.

We would like to say Happy Belated 4th Birthday to Cyrus Ottereyes on February 5th, 2008. Hope you had lots of fun on your birthday my Cyrus. Well were very sorry that we weren't there when you blew out your 4 candles. Hope you will save us some of your cake....lol....Well once again Happy belated 4th Birthday my Cyrus.. We love and we miss you so much...From your Aunt that always calls you "my Cyrus" and her husband.

We would like to say Happy Belated Birthday to my brother George J. Matoush on February 4th, 2008. Hope you had fun on your birthday brother. And I hope you didn't work hard on your b-day...And sorry I wasn't there on your birthday. Well once again Happy belated Birthday brother...love you and miss you so much...and many more birthdays to come from the very last one of your sisters.

We would like to wish a Happy Birthday to our brother Daniel Snowboy (Jr) on February 17, 2008 & many more. With love, Caroline, Mary, Betsy'sh & niece Kassidy'sh.

I would like to wish a Happy 1st Birthday & many more to come to my beautiful niece Kassidy Trinity Justine Snowboy on February 22, 2008. Love, your Aunt Caroline xoxo.

February Birthdays: my Grandpa David Blueboy, my Niece, Shania Jolly, my sister, Seanna Wapachee, and my Dad Mr. Isaiah Jolly. Another year older and a lot wiser I'm sure! Celebrate, have fun, enjoy your special day! Happy Birthday to you all! With love, Lilybelle.

Happy 12th Birthday to my one and only daughter, Shania Daphne Caroline Pompana on March 30. Hope you'll have a special day as special as you are. Always remember that I love you very much and I'll always be there for you. I know we had our ups and downs since the loss of our cousin and friend, Clyde Bunn. We still both grieve for him. He did a lot for us, being in our lives for ten years. We will always treasure what he did for us and most of all he will always remain in our hearts. I love you my girl! Your Mommy, Josephine.

I wanna wish a Happy first Birthday to a very special boy, Logan Lameboy, on March 2. Hope you have a very special day, as special as you are, and many more to come. P.S. Someday we will meet. Lol. Love ya, Josephine in Waswanipi.

Birthday wishes to my boys, first my son Dylan, who celebrated his 17th birthday on January 18 "Happy Belated Birthday" and to my other son Cameron, who will be celebrating his 9th Birthday on March 13. I love you both so much, from Mom.

I want to wish Happy Birthday to my very special friend, Daisy House Lameboy on March 21. Always remember your birthday n your whole family, 2. Thanks for always being there for me, even when you are miles n miles away. Hope you'll have a nice day on your special day. Your friend in Waswanipi.


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## ANNIVERSARIES

We would like to wish a Happy 43rd Wedding Anniversary to these two very special people in our lives, Freddie & Queenie Atsynia, on February the 9th, 2008. We love you so much! Many more anniversaries to come! XOXOXOXO...With love fom your sons Christopher, William, Adrian and Malcolm, your daughter in-law Jacqueline, your daughter Rachel and your grandchildren Gabriella, Albert, Rose-Marie and Davey in Wemindji.

We would like to wish a happy 21st anniversary to our wonderful parents, Valerie & Joe Snowboy on February 17, 2008. We love u! Caroline, Daniel, Betsy'sh, Mary & Kassidy.

## VALENTINES WISHES

I would like to say Happy Valentines to my girl..Chantal C. E. Bosum!! I love you very much and you rock my world girl!!(lol) Also to my parents, Walter & Louise B. luv you both from the bottom to top of my heart! Thank you for everything!! Also my bro Duane..who's in Gatineau or Algonquin College..whereever you are in life hope you know that I love you & miss you lots!! Keep up the great work!! I'm very proud of you!! And to my 2 "handful" sisters..hehe..love you gals!! And to all my friends; Lana, Lily, Bonez, Janis, Ange, Cat, Ray, Tyra, B, and "The Guy"[lana..shh! LOL] and whoever I forgot to mention..happy valentines day! Hope you get all the "love" you deserve..hehe. From...D.

## PERSONALS

Hi, out to give a shout to my best friend, Mathias Bosum, who's been there for me through thick, and thicker. He's been my childhood friend for 14 years now. He's been my Mortal Kombat freak with me and I thank God he brought Mathias in my life. And I also want to give another shout to my best cousin, Amanda Capassisit my randomly wickedly friend. I don't know if "wickedly" is a word, but I know she'll get me. And also I want to give a shout to my other best cousin Sharon Capassisit, who's just been there through anything I can't take. Lala, without Baby you would just be Lala. Love you Lala!! <3333 and Yessir! I want to thank Naomi Bowen too, Girl you rock!!!!!!1 XD, you're flippin awesome. You're always here for me XD. From; Meeaubin Capassisit Lacroix. aka, Meebz, Baby, and Tampax! Memories will be forever! xoxox

## PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS

Where to get help: bilingual, anonymous, confidential and free phone services, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

**Kid's Help Phone Line:** 1-800-668-6868 (www.kidshelpphone.ca)

**Youth helpline:** 1-800-263-2266 (www.teljeunes.com)

**Parent helpline:** 1-800-361-5085 (www.parenthelpline.ca)

**Drugs:** help and reference: 1-800-265-2626 (www.drogue-aidereference.qc.ca)

**Gambling:** help and reference: 1-800-265-2626 (www.info-reference.qc.ca)

**S.O.S. Conjugal Violence:** 1-800-363-9010 (www.sosviolenceconjugale.com)

**Health and Sexuality resources center:** 1-888-855-7432 (Monday to Friday, 9 am to 5 pm) (www.criss.org)

**Gay Helpline:** 1-888-505-1010 (Monday to Friday, 8 am to 3 am and Saturday-Sunday, 11 am to 3 am)

**The Native Women's Shelter of Montreal:** 1-866-403-4688. (www.nwsm.info)

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**March 3-4-5 Wemindji • March 17-18-19 Mistissini • March 25-26-27 Ouje-Bougoumou**
**April 14-15-16 Nemaska • April 21-22-23 Waswanipi • May 20-21-22 Waskaganish**
**June 2-3-4 Eastmain • June 5-6-7 Whapmagoostui • June 9-10-11 Chisasibi**

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"Very powerful. Now I'm going to go home and hug my children and tell them that I love them."

"It was excellent because you lift me up and I didn't know what to do anymore with my children."

Quotes from the parents at last year's workshop.

Rev. Mervin Cheechoo and his wife Carol Anne are originally from Moose Factory, Ontario. They have been blessed with three children: Jonathan, Kari and Jordan. Parenting their three children has been and continues to be a priority in their lives. Mervin and Carol Anne strongly believe that our communities will become strong and healthy as our families grow stronger and healthier.

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